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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 23722

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T

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TAGS: [PREL IN CE PINS](#)  
SUBJ: INDIAN FRICTION WITH LTTE GROWS

REF: COLOMBO 6523

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. ON SEPTEMBER 24 THE INDIAN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ISSUED ANOTHER WARNING TO THE LTTE THAT IT WILL RESPOND MORE FORCEFULLY IF THE TAMIL MILITANT ORGANIZATION DOES NOT STOP HAMPERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SRI LANKA PEACE ACCORD. THE MEA SPOKESMAN BLAMED THE LTTE FOR INSTIGATING AND ENGINEERING A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION SEPTEMBER 23 BETWEEN SRI LANKAN CIVILIANS AND ELEMENTS OF THE INDIAN PEACE KEEPING FORCE (IPKF). THE GROWING THREAT OF SUCH CLASHES BETWEEN SRI LANKANS AND INDIAN TROOPS APPARENTLY LIES BEHIND THE DECISION TO SEND SEVERAL BATTALIONS OF INDIAN POLICE INTO THE NORTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES OF SRI LANKA (REFTEL). THERE IS GROWING SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSITION THAT IF THE LTTE CONTINUES ITS PROVOCATIONS, THE INDIAN FORCES SHOULD MOVE MORE DECISIVELY AGAINST IT. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) THE MEA SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT A CROWD OF 900 TO 1000 PEOPLE--MAINLY LTTE SUPPORTERS WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE VANGUARD--COLLECTED IN FRONT OF THE IPKF CAMP IN MANNAR, OSTENSIBLY WANTING TO PRESENT A PETITION TO THE LOCAL INDIAN MILITARY COMMANDER. WHILE ARRANGEMENTS WERE BEING MADE FOR RECEIVING THE PETITION, THE LTTE SUPPORTERS REPORTEDLY STARTED THROWING STONES, SHOUTING SLOGANS, AND PUSHING THE CROWD INTO THE CAMP. THE IPKF FIRED FIVE ROUNDS. TWO PERSONS REPORTEDLY WERE WOUNDED BY THE FIRING AND 17 INJURED IN THE RESULTING STAMPEDE. ACCORDING TO THE LTTE, ONE OF THE PERSONS WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE SUBSEQUENTLY DIED. ACCORDING TO THE MEA SPOKESMAN, THE USE OF INNOCENT WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS A COVER FOR THE VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION WAS "REPREHENSIBLE AND COWARDLY." HE WARNED THAT INDIAN TROOPS WOULD BE "COMPELLED TO RESPOND WITH EVEN STRONGER MEASURES IF VIOLENCE IS DELIBERATELY PROVOKED BY THE LTTE."

¶3. (U) ACCORDING TO MAJOR INDIAN NEWSPAPERS ON SEPTEMBER 25, BOTH THE INDIAN AND SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GROWING IPKF-CIVILIAN TENSIONS IN THE NORTH AND AGREED THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE INDIAN PARALIMINARY RESERVE POLICE FORCE (REFTEL) IS NECESSARY FOR CROWD-CONTROL DUTIES. "IT WAS FELT BY BOTH COUNTRIES THAT FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIA THE ARMY MUST NOT BE USED REGULARLY TO PREVENT ETHNIC OR OTHER RIOTS EXCEPT IN EXTREME EMERGENCIES AND FOR VERY SHORT PERIODS. IT IS ALSO FELT THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE ARMY SOMETIMES ACTS AS AN IRRITANT TO GROUPS WHICH HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN WARFARE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. . . . IT IS LIKELY THAT THE CRPF UNITS WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH TEARGAS SHELLS, RUBBER BULLETS, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT TO COUNTER SUCH VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY MOBS. . . . THESE FORCES CAN ALSO BE USED FOR PATROLLING AREAS FROM WHERE REPORTS OF COLONIZATION BY SINHALAS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED."

¶4. (C) COMMENT. SUCCESSIVE GOI WARNINGS TO THE LTTE HAVE BEEN GIVEN HIGH EMPHASIS IN THE INDIAN MEDIA. THERE APPEARS TO BE A GROWING SENTIMENT AMONG INFORMED INDIANS--WHICH IS BEGINNING TO BE EXPRESSED IN NEWSPAPER COMMENTARIES--THAT THE IPKF MUST MOVE DECISIVELY AND FAST TO PREVENT THE INDO-SRI LANKA ACCORD FROM GOING "THE WAY OF THE PUNJAB ACCORD."

THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE GOOD WILL WHICH THE GOI WON  
AMONG TAMILS BY ITS AIR-DROP IN JUNE IS BEING ERODED  
BY LTTE PROPOGANDA ALLEGING THAT THE IPKF IS ACTING AS  
AN ALLY OF THE COLOMBO GOVERNMENT. "THE SITUATION CAN  
BE SAVED AND THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED FOR MODERATE  
LEADERS TO COME INTO THE OPEN," THE TIMES OF INDIA  
STATES, "ONLY IF THE INDIAN TROOPS MOVE QUICKLY AND  
DISARM THE LTTE COMPLETELY."

DEAN